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A NOTE ON THE *COMEDIA CALAMITA* OF TORRES NAHARRO

The plot of the *Comedia Calamita*¹ of Torres Naharro is fairly complex, but we can easily distinguish the central theme from the secondary incidents. The main theme is as follows: The young Floribundo falls madly in love with Calamita, a girl of apparently humble condition, and thereby incurs the displeasure of Euticio, Floribundo's father, who believes that his son has fallen into dissolute ways. Floribundo is aided in the prosecution of his suit by his servant Jusquino, who bribes Libina, Calamita's sister-in-law, to allow the lover to enter her house. When the lovers meet, Calamita declares that she will not lose her honor for anything in the world, and that marriage cannot be thought of because of their relative social position. Floribundo replies that he has enough money to compensate for her lack of it, agrees to the condition of marriage, which Calamita imposes, and the young people are betrothed. Euticio becomes very angry on hearing of Floribundo's disobedience, and threatens to take his life. The solution is brought about by the arrival of Trapaneo, an old acquaintance of Euticio, who first declares that he is Calamita's father, and later explains that she is the daughter of a wealthy Sicilian, whom he had saved from death and brought up in his own family as a daughter. Euticio accepts this proof of Calamita's respectability, and gladly consents to her marriage with Floribundo.

Cases of mistaken identity, the correction of which offers a solution of apparently unsurmountable difficulties, were common in Latin comedy. For example, in the *Heautontimorumenos* of Terence, Chremes commands that if his wife is delivered of a girl, the child shall immediately be killed. Having given birth to a girl, Sostrata sends her to an old woman named Philtera to be exposed. Instead of doing this, Philtera brings her up as her own daughter, with the name of Antiphila. Clinia, son of Menedemus, falls in love with her, and Menedemus opposes the youth's love to such a degree that he drives him from home. After a series of incidents which are quite dissimilar from anything in the *Comedia*

¹ The *Comedia Calamita* was probably first published at Seville in 1520, and is included in Menéndez y Pelayo's edition of the *Propaladia de Bartolomé de Torres Naharro*, Vols. ix-x of the *Libros de Antaño*, Madrid, 1880-1900.

Calamita, the girl's real identity is discovered, and her marriage to Clinia follows as a matter of course. Aside from the incident of a girl baby ordered to be put to death by her father, there is a certain resemblance between Menedemus and Euticio, both fond of their sons, but willing to take extreme measures to prevent them, if possible, from contracting a misalliance.

Still closer is the resemblance of the *Comedia Calamita* to the *Comedia Dolotechne*, composed in Latin in the year 1504 by the Venetian Bartolomeo Zamberti. Sanesi² gives the following outline of the plot of the *Comedia Dolotechne*: Policriso, an old man, desires to shield his son Mononio from the dangers of a dissolute life, and plans to arrange for his marriage with a young woman of his own station in life. He charges his servant Sfalero, who is supposed to guide Mononio in the paths of virtue, to persuade him to consent to the marriage. But, contrary to the expectations of the old man, Mononio has already fallen in love with Rodostoma, a young girl who had run away from home and had fallen into the hands of the *ruffiano* Crisofago, a brutal, greedy fellow, who is willing to turn her over to the highest bidder. His wife, Merofila, succeeds in protecting her in the hope of disposing of her at a high price, which the *ruffiano* has fixed at 300 minæ. Merofila hears from Rodostoma the confession of her love for Mononio, and learns from the latter that he is enamored with Rodostoma. She declares that, if Mononio pays the 300 minæ, Rodostoma will be his. The youth has no money, but Sfalero secures it from an old woman, Bdeliria, on a false promise that his master will return her love. Rodostoma then comes into the possession of Mononio, whose father bitterly reproaches him when he presents himself with his bride, and severely punishes Sfalero for his part in the affair. An old friend of Policriso, named Alitologo, then appears, who has spent years in search of his daughter who had been stolen from him. He recognizes in Rodostoma his daughter, and the two fathers gladly consent to the wedding.

Without the text of the *Comedia Dolotechne*, it is impossible to speak with certainty regarding the relationship between these two plays, but they offer a striking resemblance even in this meager outline. The fathers Policriso and Alitologo correspond to Euticio and Trapanio (except that Trapanio has only acted as Calamita's father); the two young men are not dissolute, their disobedience

² Ireneo Sanesi, *La Commedia*, Milan, 1911, I, 127-129.

is caused by a genuine passion; the intrigue is conceived and executed by the servants Sfalero and Jusquino, although the expedient by which the former obtains money to carry out his plan is not found in Naharro's play; both Rodostoma and Calamita have remained pure in spite of their environment, although the latter seems to have possessed more nobility of character; a happy dénouement is brought about by evidence of mistaken identity. The chief difference between the two plays lies in the characters of the man and wife with whom the heroine is living, namely, Crisofago and Merifila and Torcazo and Libina.

Torcazo is the type of complacent husband, easily imposed upon by his wife and others, which appears frequently in early Italian *novelle* and jest books. He offers many points of resemblance with Boccaccio's Calandrino and with Martín de Villalba in Lope de Rueda's *Tercer Paso*. His wife, Libina, is keenly conscious of her husband's stupidity, and does not hesitate to deceive him by admitting into her house a young student disguised as a woman. Jusquino finds that she is quite ready to encourage the suit of Floribundo in return for substantial payment in money. Torcazo also recalls Calandro in *La Calandria* (1513) of Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena, and it has been pointed out³ that Jusquino's instructions to Torcazo how to feign death, in the fifth act of *Calamita*, are derived from the ninth scene of the second act of *La Calandria*. While the setting of the two incidents differs somewhat, there is a verbal similarity which makes it more than probable that Torres Naharro borrowed the scene from the Italian dramatist. Furthermore, the second scene of the first act of *La Calandria*, in which Polinico reproves Fessenio for encouraging the disobedience and misconduct of Lidio, reminds us of the scene in the third act of *Calamita*, in which Fileo holds Jusquino responsible for the waywardness of Floribundo. The disguise adopted by Lidio in order to enter the house of Fulvia, Calandro's wife, recalls the intrigue by means of which the young student gains admission into the house of Torcazo, and in both cases the husband falls in love with his betrayer. Since *La Calandria* was not published until 1521, it is probable that Torres Naharro witnessed its performance in 1513, and incorporated some of the incidents from memory into his own *Calamita*.

J. P. WICKERSHAM CRAWFORD.

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³ Francesco Flamini, *Il Cinquecento*, Milan, p. 317.